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Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 MC-02 AID-05 EB-07 COME-00 H-02 TRSE-00 /054 W
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P R 182134Z FEB 76
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3532
DOD/WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 1792

EO: 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, CO
SUBJ: FY 1977 MILITARY SECURITY ASSISTANCE

REF: STATE 036160

1. FOLLOWING INFORMATION CONSTITUTES REPLY TO PARA 5 REFTEL. THE REPLY IS ESSENTIALLY THAT GIVEN ON 7 NOVEMBER 1975 IN RESPONSE TO SAME QUERY REGARDING FY 76 FMS CREDIT. COMMENTS KEYED TO PARAGRAPH NUMBERS OF REFTEL:

2. (5.A) HOST COUNTRY MILITARY HAS INDICATED A DESIRE FOR FMS CREDIT OF UP TO $30 MILLION IN FY 75, 76 AND 77. THEIR NEED FOR EQUIPMENT IS GREAT PARTIALLY DUE TO LACK OF ANY FMS CREDIT SUBSEQUENT TO FY 73. GOC WILL READILY ACCEPT A U.S. LOAN PROVIDED IT CAN BE MADE KNOWN TO THEM SUFFICIENTLY IN ADVANCE TO ALLOW THEM TO MEET THE COMPLICATED COLOMBIAN LEGAL PROCESS FOR UNDERTAKING FOREIGN FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS.

3. (5.B) MAJOR ITEMS TO BE PROCURRED IN PRIORITY ORDER AS DETERMINED BY COUNTRY TEAM. (BOTH LISTING AND PRIORITY ORDER ARE NECESSARILY SUBJECT TO DEVELOPMENTS WITH REFERENCE TO AVAILABILITY AND AMOUNT OF FY 76 CREDIT. HOWEVER, ITEMS ARE ALL CONVENTIONAL AND, WITH EXCEPTION OF A-37B AIRCRAFT, ALREADY REPRESENTED IN COLOMBIAN INVENTORY.) UTILITY AND OBSERVATION HELICOPTERS,
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ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS, PATROL CRAFT (PGM), T-37C AIRCRAFT,

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DESTROYER (DD), ENGINEER EQUIPMENT, TRUCKS, TRAINING SUBMARINE (SS), C-130H AIRCRAFT, HARBOR AND LANDING CRAFT, A-37 B AIRCRAFT, COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT.

4. (5.C) YES. PROVISIONS OF CREDIT SUPPORTS MILITARY REQUIREMENTS DERIVED FROM U.S. APPROVED FORCE GOALS AS DESCRIBED IN JSOP.

5. (5.D) THERE ARE ADDITIONAL MILITARY JUSTIFICATIONS FOR FMS CREDIT. THE COLOMBIAN ARMED FORCES SUFFER SEVERELY FROM LACK OF EQUIPMENT. THE ARMY MUST MOVE LARGE QUANTITIES OF EQUIPMENT BETWEEN UNITS TO CONDUCT MANEUVERS AND TO MEET THE INTERNAL SECURITY THREAT. OUR ESTIMATES ARE THAT THEY HAVE ABOUT 30 PERCENT OF THE EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR THEIR FORCES. IN ADDITION, MUCH OF THE EQUIPMENT OF ALL SERVICES IS OLD AND DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN. THE U.S. REMAINS FIRST CHOICE AS SUPPLIER SUBJECT TO PRICE AND AVAILABILITY IN COMPARISON TO THE OTHER NATIONS WHO SUPPLY ARMS. IT IS BELIEVED THAT WHEN GENERAL LOMBANA BECOMES COMMANDER OF THE ARMED FORCES, IN EARLY MARCH 1976, HE WILL PARTICULARLY FAVOR U.S. ARMS PURCHASES. HE HAS STATED THAT WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED UP TO OUR CONTRACTS AND HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SUPPLY SPARE PARTS AND SERVICE VERY READILY.

6. (5.E) THE FMS CREDIT PROGRAM AND THE USE OF GRANT TRAINING BOTH HELP TO SUPPORT OUT OBJECTIVE OF MAINTAINING INFLUENCE, FRIENDSHIP AND AN ON-GOING WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY. THE MAP TRAINING PROGRAMS CONDUCTED IN CONUS, IN THE CANAL ZONE, AND IN COLOMBIA WITH MOBILE TRAINING TEAMS PROVIDE THE REQUISITE TRAINING FOR USE OF THE MATERIAL PROVIDED BY THE FMS PROGRAM.

7. (5.F) IN VIEW OF COLOMBIA'S STATUS AS ONE OF THE TWO SURVIVING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS ON THE SOUTH AMERICAN CONTINENT, AND IN VIEW OF THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY'S NEARLY UNIQUE RECORD OF NON-INTERVENTION, U.S. ASSISTANCE SERVES BOTH TO BOLSTER FREE INSTITUTIONS IN COLOMBIA AND TO PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE ABROAD OF OUR READINESS TO SUPPORT DEMOCRATIC REGIMES. IN ADDITION, THE ARMED FORCES, OF CCDMGEY KEY GROUPS IN THE NATION, ARE THE MOST PRO-U.S. IN OUTLOOK. A FAILURE ON OUR PART TO PROVIDE FMS CREDITS WOULD BE A REFUBB TO INFLUENTIAL FRIENDS IN THE MILITARY AND WOULD, IN THE REGIONAL CONTEXT, BE CONTRASTED WITH OUR READINESS
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TO PROVIDE ARMAMENTS TO NON-ELECTED REGIMES IN LATIN AMERICA AND ELSEWHERE.

8. (5.G) THE AMOUNT OF FMS CREDIT PROPOSED (26 MILLION DOLLARS) IS NOT OF A LEVEL TO SUPPORT AN ARMS RACE IN THIS REGION.

9. (5.H) THERE IS A DEMONSTRABLE NEED FOR FMS CREDIT ASSISTANCE. THE GOC HAS, OVER THE YEARS, ASSIGNED A DIMINISHING LEVEL OF ITS

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REVENUES TO THE ARMED FORCES, DEVOTING ITS RESOURCES INSTEAD TO SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. AS A RESULT, THE ARMED FORCES NOW FREQUENTLY OPERATE WITH OUTDATED AND IN MANY CASES NON-FUNCTIONING EQUIPMENT, MUCH OF WHICH SHOULD BE SCRAPPED. THE RISING CONCERN OVER INSECURITY ALSO MAKES IT DESIRABLE THAT THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY BE CAPABLE OF MOUNTING EFFECTIVE INTERNAL SECURITY OPERATIONS. IN VIEW OF THE CURRENT PRIORITIES ASSIGNED TO THE VARIOUS NEEDS OF THE COLOMBIAN SOCIETY, FMS CREDIT WILL PROVIDE THE ARMED FORCES WITH USEFUL AND SORELY NEEDED, BUT OTHERWISE UNOBTAINABLE EQUIPMENT.

10. (5.I) THE PROPOSED TWENTY-SIX MILLION DOLLARS OF FMS CREDIT IS WELL WITHING THE GOC'S ABILITY TO HANDLE, IN THE CONTEXT OF PROJECTED ECONOMIC AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS GROWTH.

11. (5.J) COLOMBIA CONTINUES TO MAKE RELATIVELY MODEST ARMS PURCHASES. THE COLOMBIAN NAVY PURCHASES SURPLUS SHIPS FROM THE U.S. AS WELL AS SUPPORTING EQUIPMENT AND TECHNICAL SERVICES ON A CASH BASIS WITHOUT USE OF FMS CREDIT. THE NAVY IS CURRENTLY SHOPPING FOR NEW PATROL CRAFT OF SIZE 100-120 FT. THEY ARE PLANNING A $50-$100 MILLION BUY. THE AIR FORCE ALSO USES CASH SALES FOR SUPPORTING EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES WITH FMS CREDIT NORMALLY BEING RESERVED FOR MAJOR PURCHASES. THE ARMY HAS MADE CASH PURCHASES OF 7.62 MM AMMUNITION AND OF REPLACEMENT PARTS (FROM GERMANY) FOR G-3 RIFLES. THE GOC IN 1975 USED THE LAST OF THE 10 MILLION DOLLAR FMS CREDIT LOAN OF FEBRUARY 1973. 50 PERCENT OF THE MONEY WAS USED FOR VEHICLES (ARMY), 10 PERCENT FOR FIELD MEDICAL EQUIPMENT, 8 PERCENT FOR COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT AND 32 PERCENT ON ENGINEER EQUIPMENT, INDIVIDUAL SOLDIERS' EQUIPMENT, AND PACKING AND REPAIR EQUIPMENT FOR AIRBORNE BATALLIONS. THE MAJOR THIRD COUNTRY ARMS PURCHASE OF THE PAST YEAR WAS THAT OF TWO SMALL FLEET-TYPE SUBMARINES FROM GERMANY (50 MILLION DOLLARS TOTAL). THERE WERE ALSO, PRESUMABLY, OUTLAYS FOR FOLLOW-ON PARTS FOR THE CONFIDENTIAL

MIRAGE AIRCRAFT. MOST RECENT INDICATIONS ARE THAT COLOMBIA WANTS TO USE U.S. FMS CREDIT FOR ALL PURCHASES POSSIBLE.
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